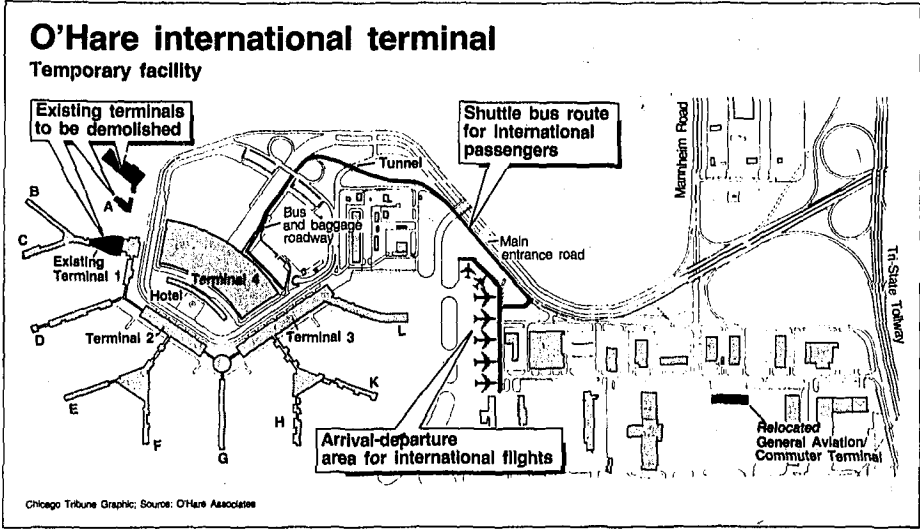


Cloudy outlook at O'Hare: Unfinished terminal already has detractors
Washburn, Gary;Jouzaitis, Carol
Chicago Tribune (1963-Current file); Mar 12, 1985; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune
pg. A1



Cloudy outlook at O'Hare

Unfinished terminal already has detractors

By Gary Washburn
and Carol Jouzaitis

City officials are holding their breath, and airline executives are crossing their fingers as tradesmen rush to complete a temporary international terminal at O'Hare International Airport.

The new facility, carved out of the first floor of O'Hare's parking garage, is to open Friday. But scores of workers, laboring under a cloud of construction dust, were still banging, drilling, painting, installing and sweeping on Monday, with much obviously yet to be done.

Friday's scheduled opening aside, some airline officials and travel agents are questioning how smoothly the terminal will function and even whether it is necessary.

City officials concede that the interim facility won't be perfect, but they say it will be a cut above what international travelers at O'Hare now face.

Opening of the new temporary terminal, part of a \$1.4 billion expansion and improvement program at O'Hare, will permit demolition of the dingy, crowded terminal that international travelers have grown to hate.

That building, built more than 34 years ago as O'Hare's first

domestic terminal, is considered beyond rehabilitation. It is inaccessible to the handicapped, has inadequate baggage claim areas and has a troublesome security layout, officials say.

The interim international terminal, designed to cure these problems, is the work of noted Chicago architect Helmut Jahn.

Replete with tile work in black and shades of gray and bearing a \$30 million price tag, it looks anything but temporary. Officials say, however, that plans call for completion of a permanent terminal in about five years. Then the temporary ter-

Continued on page 5, this section

O'Hare

Continued from page 1, this section
minal will be converted to another
use.

Passengers on most international flights arriving at and departing O'Hare will go through the new terminal. [Exceptions will include travelers leaving on Japan Air Lines and Lufthansa German Airlines, who will depart from the Delta Air Lines portion of Terminal 3.]

Because the temporary terminal is on the ground level, cars dropping off departing passengers will take the roadway that previously had been reserved for arrivals.

Passengers will enter a ticketing lobby, twice the size of the one in the old terminal, and pass a concession area with a restaurant, bar and duty-free shop. After passing through a security checkpoint, they will enter a waiting area.

Shuttle buses will take travelers from the terminal on a 10-minute ride to a long slab of concrete, or "hardstand," where the airplanes will be parked. Boarding will be via portable stairways rather than the expandable corridors common in the rest of the airport.

Incoming passengers, bused to the terminal, will pass through customs and baggage-claim areas, emerging into a 15,000-square-foot lobby. They then will walk outside for ground transportation or take elevators up to the parking garage or down to the Chicago Transit Authority's rapid-transit station.

Travel agents and international airline executives privately express reservations about the procedures that will accompany the interim facility.

They fear that the busing system will cause delays and that customers who arrive at the terminal less than 20 minutes before departure will miss flights because of the need to be shuttled to planes.

They are also afraid that passengers will be doused by rain and chilled by cold as they climb the exposed stairs to the aircraft and that there will be problems getting baggage between the planes and the terminal.

City officials concede that glitches are likely when the new facility opens. But dealing with them now should mean smooth operations by the time of the summer travel rush, they say.

"It's a necessary risk," said Rommy Lopat, spokeswoman for the city's Department of Aviation.